

A LECTURE 4

ON

The Anti-Slavery Enterprise,

ITS NECESSITY, PRACTICABILITY, AND DIGNITY,

WITH GLIMPSES OF THE SPECIAL DUTIES OF THE NORTH.

BY HON. CHARLES SUMNER.

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That a lecture should be repeated in New York is a rare occurrence. That a lecture on Anti-Slavery should be repeated in New York, even before a few despised 'fanatics,' is an unparalleled occurrence. But that an Anti-Slavery lecture should be repeated night after night to successive multitudes, each more enthusiastic than the last, marks the epoch of a revolution in popular feeling. It is an era in the history of liberty.

Niblo's Theatre was crowded last evening long before the hour of commencement. Hundreds stood through the three hours' lecture. The equality of the races was practically asserted by the presence of both in pit and boxes. Gray-headed men were there, young men, all with earnest look. Fans were waving; epaulettes were not wanting. We give a full report of the words of the lecture, but only of the words.

The magnificent presence of the orator, physically as well as mentally a giant, and symmetrical as his own orations; the grand organ-music of his voice bearing to the heart the intense conviction that it comes deep out of the heart. The calm strength of his delivery, breathing the conscious assurance of eventual victory; the thunder-bursts of cheers and bravos which ran electric through the entranced circle of listeners—echoes of thunder-bursts of eloquence—all these we cannot give. We give the words alone.

LECTURE.

MR. SUMNER was conducted to the stage by Mr. Joseph Blunt, the Chairman of the occasion. Mr. Blunt said :

FELLOW CITIZENS :—The events lately transpiring on the western frontier of Missouri have attracted the public attention and deeply interested the American community. Connected with the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, they have shown to the people of the Northern States that there is no utility in unnecessary or further concessions. That on the subject of Slavery we must stand upon the ground marked out by our fathers who formed that Constitution ; that we must maintain the rights of the free men of the North to the public territory not yet cursed with Slavery. What measures may be necessary in order to maintain those rights depends alone upon the future. Congress, in repealing the Missouri Compromise, opened that territory to the contest concerning that exciting topic which has so deeply divided the American people since the establishment of our Government. The settlers and residents in that territory have been silenced, and their voices overborne by an organized an armed invasion from a neighboring state. In the exciting contest the first blood has been shed. How far it is to go must depend upon the future and upon the exercise of the constitutional powers vested in the Chief Magistrate of the country. If he has wisdom, firmness, and decision, he may prevent fatal results. Without that, it must depend upon the freemen of the North to determine that their constitutional rights shall be at all events maintained. In the last Congress there were representatives from the North who stood firmly and manfully by the rights of their constituents. Among them was one whom I now introduce to you—the states-

man, the scholar, and the gentleman—CHARLES SUMNER of Massachusetts.

Mr. Sumner was received with tremendous applause which was prolonged for several minutes. When at last it had subsided he said :

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW-CITIZENS OF NEW YORK :—You have aptly said, Mr. President, that we are on the eve of a contest, and I shall be happy if any words that may fall from my lips may invigorate a single soul to perform the duty which becomes a free man. History abounds in vicissitudes. From weakness and humility, men ascend to power and place. From defeat and disparagement, enterprises are lifted to triumph and acceptance. The martyr of to-day is gratefully enshrined on the morrow. The stone that the builders rejected is made the head of the corner. Thus it always has been, and ever will be.

Only twenty years ago—in 1835—the friends of the slave in our country were weak and humble, while their great enterprise, just then showing itself, was trampled down and despised. The small companies then gathered together in the name of Freedom were interrupted and often dispersed by riotous mobs. At Boston, a feeble association of women, called the Female Anti-slavery Society, convened in a small room of an upper story, in an obscure building, was insulted, and then driven out of doors by a frantic crowd, politely termed, at the time, an assemblage of “gentlemen of property and standing,” which, after various deeds of violence and villainy, next directed itself on William Lloyd Garrison—known as the determined editor of *The Liberator*, and the originator of the Anti-Slavery enterprise in our day—and, ruthlessly tearing him away amid savage threats, and with a halter about his neck, dragged him through the streets, until at last, guilty only of loving liberty, if not wisely, too well, this unoffending citizen was thrust into the common jail for protection against an infuriate populace. Nor was Boston alone. Even villages in remote rural solitude belched forth in similar outrage. While the large towns, like Providence, New Haven, Utica, Worcester, Alton, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, became so many fiery craters, overflowing with rage and madness. What lawless violence failed to accomplish was next urged through the forms of law. By solemn legislative acts, the Slave States called on the Free States, “promptly and effectually to suppress all associations within their respective limits, purporting to be Abolition Societies,” and Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New York, basely hearkened to the base proposition. The Press, too, with untold power, exerted itself in this behalf, while the pulpit, the politician, and the merchant, conspired to stifle discussion, until the voice of freedom was hushed to a whisper “alas, almost afraid to know itself.”

Since then, in the lapse of a few years only, a change has taken place. Instead of those small companies counted by tens, we have now this mighty assembly counted by thousands ; instead of an insignificant apartment, like that in Boston, the mere appendage of a printing office, where, as in the manger itself, Truth was cradled, we have now this Metropolitan Hall, ample in proportions and central in place ; instead of a profane and clamorous mob beating at our gates, dispersing our assembly, and making one of our number the victim of its fury, we have now peace and

harmony at unguarded doors, ruffled only by a generous competition to participate in this occasion; while legislators openly declare their sympathies, villages, towns and cities vie in the new manifestation, and the press itself, with increased power, heralds, applauds and extends the prevailing influence, which, overflowing from every fountain, and pouring through every channel, at last, by the awakened voice of pulpit, politician and merchant swells into an irrepressible cry.

Here is a great change worthy of notice and memory, for it attests the first stage of victory. Slavery, in all its many-sided wrong still continues; but here in this metropolis, aye, sir, and throughout the whole North, freedom of discussion is at length secured. And this, I say, is the first stage of victory—herald of the transcendent future.

“Hark! a glad voice the lonely desert cheers;
Prepare the way! a God, a God appears?
A God! a God! the vocal hills reply;
The rocks proclaim the approaching Deity.

Nor is there anything peculiar in the trials to which our cause has been exposed. Thus in all ages has Truth been encountered. At first persecuted, gagged, silenced, crucified, she has cried out from the prison, from the torture, from the stake, from the cross, until at last her voice has been heard. And when that voice is really heard, whether in martyr cries or in earthquake tones of civil convulsion, or in the calmness of ordinary speech such as I now employ, or in that still, small utterance inaudible to the common ear, then is the beginning of victory! “Give me where to stand” and I will move the world,” said Archimedes; and Truth asks no more than did the master of geometry.

Viewed in this aspect, the present occasion rises above an ordinary course of lectures or series of political meetings. It is the inauguration of Freedom. From this time forward her voice of warning and command cannot be silenced. The sensitive sympathies of property may, in this commercial mart, once again recognize property in man; the watchful Press itself may falter or fail, but the vantage-ground of free discussion now achieved cannot be lost. On this I take my stand and, as from the Mount of Vision, behold the whole field of our great controversy spread before me. There is no point, topic, fact, matter, reason or argument touching the question between Slavery and Freedom which is not now open. Of all these I might perhaps aptly select some one and confine myself to its development. But I should not in this way best satisfy the seeming requirements of the occasion. According to the invitation of your Committee, I was to make an address introductory to the present course of lectures, but was prevented by ill-health. And now, at the close of the course, I am to say what I failed to say at its beginning. Not as caucous or as Congress can I address you; nor am I moved to undertake a political harangue or constitutional argument. Out of the occasion let me speak, and, discarding any individual topic; strive to exhibit the entire field in all its divisions and subdivisions, with all its metes and bounds.

My subject will be, **THE NECESSITY, PRACTICABILITY AND DIGNITY OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY ENTERPRISE, WITH GLIMPSES AT THE SPECIAL DUTIES OF THE NORTH.** By this enterprise I do not mean the efforts of any restricted

circle, sect, or party, but the cause of the slave, in all its forms and degrees, and under all its names—whether inspired by the Pulpit, the Press, the economist, or the politician—whether in the early, persistent and comprehensive demands of Garrison, the gentler utterances of Channing, or the strictly constitutional endeavors of others now actually sharing the public counsels of the country. To carry through this review under its different heads, I shall not hesitate to meet the objections which have been urged against this enterprise, so far at least as I am aware of them. And now, as I address you seriously, I venture to ask your serious attention even to the end. Not easily can a public address reach that highest completeness which is found in mingling the useful and the agreeable; but I desire to say, that in this arrangement and co-ordination of my remarks to-night, I seek to cultivate that highest courtesy of a speaker which is found in clearness.

I. I begin with the NECESSITY of the Anti-Slavery enterprise. In the wrong of slavery, *as defined by existing law*, this necessity is plainly apparent; nor can any man within the sound of my voice, who listens to the authentic words of the law, hesitate in my conclusion. A wrong so grievous and unquestionable should not be allowed to continue. For the honor of human nature and for the good of all concerned, it should at once cease to exist. On this simple statement, as on a corner stone, I found the necessity of the Anti-Slavery enterprise.

I do not dwell, sir, on the many tales which come from the house of bondage; on the bitter sorrows there undergone; on the flesh galled by the manacle or spirting blood beneath the lash; on the human form mutilated by the knife or seared by red-hot iron; on the ferocious scent of blood-hounds in chase of human prey; on the sale of fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, little children—even infants—at the auction-block; on the practical prostration of all rights, all ties, and even all hopes; on the deadly injury to morals, substituting concubinage for marriage, and changing the whole land of slavery into a by-word of shame only fitly pictured by the horrible language of Dante when he called his own degraded country a House of Ill-Fame; and last of all, on the pernicious influence upon the master as well as the slave, showing itself too often, even by his own confession, in rudeness of manners and character, and especially in that blindness which renders him insensible to the wrong he upholds, while he,

“—so perfect is his misery,
Not once perceives his foul disfigurement,
But boasts himself more comely than before.”

On these things I do not dwell, although volumes are at hand of unquestionable facts, and of illustrative story so just and happy as to vie with fact, out of which I might draw until, like Macbeth, you had supped full of horrors.

But all these I put aside; not because I do not regard them of moment in exhibiting the true character of slavery, but because I desire to present this argument on grounds above all controversy, impeachment or suspicion, even from slave masters themselves. Not on triumphant story, not even on indisputable facts, do I now accuse slavery, but on its character as revealed in its own simple definition of itself. Out of its own

mouth do I condemn it. By the law of slavery man created in the image of God is divested of his human character, and declared to be a mere chattel. That this statement may not seem to be put forward without precise authority, I quote the law of two different States. The civil code of Louisiana thus defines a slave:

"A slave is one who is in the power of a master to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry, and his labor. He can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything but what must belong to his master."—*Civil Code*, Art. 35.

The law of another polished Slave State gives this definition:

"Slaves shall be deemed, sold, taken, reputed and adjudged in law to be chattels personal in the hands of their owners and possessors and their executors, administrators and assignees, in all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever."—2 *Brev. Dig.* 229.

And a careful writer, Judge Stroud, in a work of judicial as well as philanthropic merit, thus sums up the law:

"The cardinal principle of slavery—that the slave is not to be ranked among sentient beings, but among *things*—is an article of property, a chattel personal—obtains as undoubted law in all of these (the slave) States."—*Stroud's Laws of Slavery*, 22.

Sir, this is enough. As out of its small egg crawls forth the slimy, scaly reptile crocodile, so out of this simple definition crawls forth the whole slimy, scaly reptile monstrosity by which a man is changed into a chattel—a person is converted into a thing—a soul is transmuted into merchandise. According to this very definition the slave is held simply for the good of his master, to whose behests his life, liberty and happiness are devoted, and by whom he may be bartered, leased, mortgaged, bequeathed, invoiced, shipped as cargo, stored as goods, sold on execution, knocked off at public auction, and even staked at the gaming table on the hazard of a card or a die. The slave may seem to have a wife, but he has not, for his wife belongs to his master; he may seem to have a child, but he has not, for his child belongs to his master. He may be filled with the desire of knowledge, opening to him the gates of hope on earth and in heaven, but the master may impiously close this sacred pursuit. Thus is he robbed not merely of privileges, but of himself; not merely of money and labor, but of wife and children; not merely of time and opportunity, but of every assurance of happiness; not merely of earthly hope, but of all those divine aspirations that spring from the fountain of light; He is not merely restrained in liberty, but totally deprived of it; not merely curtailed in rights, but absolutely stripped of them; not merely loaded with burdens, but changed into a beast of burden; not merely bent in countenance to the earth, but sunk to the legal level of a quadruped; not merely exposed to personal cruelty, but deprived of his character as a person; not merely compelled to involuntary labor, but degraded to be a rude thing; not merely shut out from knowledge, but wrested from his place in the human family. And all this, sir, is according to the simple law of slavery.

Nor is even this all. The law, by cumulative provisions, positively forbids that a slave shall be taught to read. Hear this, fellow citizens, and confess that no barbarism of despotism, no extravagance of tyranny, no excess of impiety, can be more blasphemous or deadly. "Train up a child in the way he should go," is the lesson of sacred wisdom; but the law of slavery boldly prohibits any such training, and dooms the child to hopeless ignorance and degradation. "Let there be light," was the Divine utterance at the very dawn of creation—and this commandment, traveling with the ages and the hours, still speaks with the voice of God; but the law of slavery says, "Let there be darkness."

But it is earnestly averred that slave-masters are humane, and that slaves are treated with kindness. These averments, however, I properly put aside, precisely as I have already put aside the multitudinous illustrations from the cruelty of slavery. On the simple letter of the law I take my stand, and do not go beyond what is there nominated. The masses of men are not better than their laws, and whatever may be the eminence of individual virtue, it is not reasonable to infer that the masses of slave-masters are better than the law of slavery. And since this law submits the slave to their irresponsible control, with power to bind and to scourge—to shut the soul from knowledge—to separate families—to unclasp the infant from a mother's breast and the wife from a husband's arms—it is natural to conclude that such enormities are sanctioned by them, while the brutal prohibition of instruction by supplementary law, gives crowning evidence of their complete complicity. And this conclusion must exist unquestioned just so long as the law exists unrepealed. Cease, then, to blazon the humanity of slave-masters. Tell me not of the lenity with which this cruel law is tempered to its unhappy subjects. Tell me not of the sympathy which overflows from the mansion of the master to the cabin of the slave. In vain you assert these instances. In vain you show that there are individuals who do not exert the wickedness of the law. The law still endures. The institution of Slavery, which it defines and upholds, continues to outrage public opinion, and within the limits of our republic upwards of three millions of human beings guilty only of a skin not colored like your own are left the victims of its unrighteous, irresponsible power.

Power divorced from right is devilish; power, without the check of responsibility is tyrannical; and I need not go back to the authority of Plato, when I assert, that the most complete injustice is that which is erected into the form of law. But all these things concur in slavery. It is, then, on the testimony of slave-masters, solemnly, legislatively, judicially attested in the very law itself, that I now arraign this institution, as an outrage upon man and his Creator. And here is the necessity of the Anti-Slavery enterprise. A wrong so transcendent, so loathsome, so direful, must be encountered wherever it can be reached, and the battle must be continued without truce or compromise, until the field is entirely won. Freedom and slavery can hold no divided empire; nor can there be any true repose until freedom is everywhere established.

To the necessity of the Anti-Slavery Enterprise there are two and only two vital objections; one founded on the alleged distinction of race, and the other on the alleged sanction of Christianity. All other objections are of an inferior character, or are directed logically at its practicability. Of these two leading objections let me briefly speak.

1. And, first, of the alleged distinction of race. This objection itself assumes two different forms, one founded on a prophetic malediction in the Old Testament, and the other on the professed observations of recent science. Its importance is apparent in the obvious fact, that unless such distinction be clearly and unmistakably established, every argument by which our own freedom is vindicated—every applause awarded to the successful rebellion of our fathers—every indignant word ever hurled against the enslavement of our white fellow-citizens by Algerine corsairs, must plead trumpet-tongued against the deep damnation of slavery, whether white or black.

It is said that the Africans are the posterity of Ham, the son of Noah, through Canaan, who was cursed by Noah, to be the servant of his brethren, and that this malediction has descended upon all his posterity, including the unhappy Africans, who are accordingly devoted by God, through unending generations, to unending bondage. Such is the favorite argument often put forth at the South, and more than once directly addressed to myself. Here, for instance, is a passage from a letter recently received: "You need not persist," says the writer, "in confounding Japheth's children with Ham's, and making both races one, and arguing on their rights as those of man broadly." And I have been seriously assured that until this objection is answered it will be in vain to press my views upon Congress or the country. Listen now to the texts of the Old Testament which are so strangely employed.

"And he (Noah) said, cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant."—*Genesis*, chap. ix, 25-27.

That is all; and I need only read these words in order to expose the whole transpicious humbug. But I am tempted to add, that, to justify this objection, it will be necessary to maintain at least, five different propositions, as essential links in the chain of the African slave: *first*, that by this malediction Canaan himself was actually changed into a chattel, whereas he is simply made the servant of his brethren; *secondly*, that not merely Canaan, but all his posterity, to the remotest generations, was so changed, whereas the language has no such extent; *thirdly*, that the African belongs to the posterity of Canaan—an ethnographical assumption absurdly difficult to establish; *fourthly*, That each of the descendants of Shem or Japheth has a right to hold an African fellow-man as a chattel—a proposition which finds no semblance of support; and *fifthly*, that every slave-master is truly descended from Shem or Japheth—a degree which no anxiety or audacity can prove! The plain analysis, which may fitly excite a smile, shows the five-fold absurdity of an attempt to found this revolting wrong on.

"Any successive title, long and dark,
Drawn from the musty rolls of Noah's ark."

The small bigotry which could find comfort in these texts, has been lately exalted by the suggestions of science, that the different races of

men are not derived from a single pair, but from several distinct stocks, according to their several distinct characteristics; and it has been audaciously argued that the African is so far inferior, as to lose all title to that liberty which is the birthright of the lordly white. Now, I have neither time nor disposition, on this occasion, to discuss the question of the unity of races; nor is it necessary to my present purpose. It may be that the different races of men proceeded from different stocks; but there is only *one* great Human Family, in which Caucasian and African, Chinese and Indian, are all brothers, children of one Father, and heirs to one happiness—alike on earth and in Heaven. “Star-eyed science” cannot shake this everlasting truth. It may vainly exhibit peculiarities in the African, by which he is distinguished from the Caucasian. It may, in his physical form and intellectual character, presume to find the stamp of permanent inferiority. But by no reach of learning, by no torture of facts, by no effrontery of dogma, can it show that he is not *a man*. And as a man he stands before you an unquestionable member of the Human Family, and entitled to *all the rights of man*. You can claim nothing for yourself, as *man*, which you must not accord to him—*Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*—which you proudly declare to be your own inalienable God-given rights, and to the support of which your fathers pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor—are his by the same immortal title that they are yours.

2 From the objection founded on the alleged distinction of race, I pass on to that other founded on the alleged *sanction of Slavery by Christianity*. And striving to be brief, I shall not undertake to reconcile texts often quoted from the Old Testament, which, whatever may be their import are all absorbed in the later New; nor shall I stop to consider the precise interpretation of the oft-quoted phrase, *Servants obey your masters*; nor seek to weigh any such imperfect injunction in the scales against those grand commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets. Surely in the example and teachings of our Saviour who lifted up the down-trodden, who enjoyed purity of life and overflowed with tenderness even to little children, human ingenuity can find no apology for an institution which tramples on man, which defiles woman, and sweeps little children beneath the hammer of the auctioneer. If to any one these things seem to have the license of Christianity, it is only because they have secured a license in his own soul. Men are prone to find in uncertain disconnected texts, a confirmation of their own personal prejudices or prepossessions. And I—who am no divine but a simple layman—make bold to say that whoever finds in the Gospel any sanction of slavery, finds there merely a reflection on himself. On a matter so irresistibly clear authority is superfluous; but an eminent character, who as poet makes us forget his high place as philosopher, and as philosopher makes us forget his high place as theologian, has exposed the essential antagonism between Christianity and slavery in a few pregnant words which you will be glad to hear—particularly as I believe they have not been before introduced into this discussion: “By a principle essential to Christianity,” says Coleridge, “a *person* is eternally differenced from a *thing*; so that the *idea of a Human Being necessarily excludes the idea of property in that Being.*”

With regret, though not with astonishment, I learn that a Boston divine has sought to throw the seamless garment of Christ over this shocking wrong. But I am patient, and see clearly how vain will be his effort.

when I call to mind that within this very century other divines sought to throw the same seamless garment over the more shocking slave-trade; and that among other publications a little book was then put forth with the name of a reverend clergyman on the title-page, to prove that "the African trade for negro slaves is consistent with the principles of humanity and revealed religion;" and thinking of these things I am ready to say with Shakspeare,

"-----In religion,
What damned error, but some sober drow
Will bless it and approve it with a text?"

In the support of slavery it is the habit to pervert texts and to invent authority. Even St. Paul is vouched for a wrong which his Christian life rebukes. Great stress is now laid on his example as it appears in the epistle to Philemon, written at Rome, and sent by Onesimus, a servant. From the single chapter constituting the entire epistle I take the following passage, in ten verses, which is strangely invoked for slavery :

"*I beseech thee for my son Onesimus*, whom I have begotten in my bonds ; which in times past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me ; whom I have sent again ; thou, therefore, receive him, that is mine own bowels ; whom I would have retained with me that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the Gospel ; but without thy mind would I do nothing, that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season that thou shouldest receive him forever ; *not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved*, specially to me, but how much more unto thee both in the flesh and in the Lord ? *If thou count me, therefore, as a partner, receive him as myself*. If he hath wronged thee or oweth thee ought, put that to my account. I, Paul, have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it ; albeit, I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides."—*Epistle Philemon*, verses 16—19.

Of this affectionate epistle, in which St. Paul calls the converted servant, Onesimus, his *son*, precisely as in another epistle he calls Timothy his son, Slavery has been elaborately vindicated, and the great Apostle to the Gentiles has been made the very tutelary saint of the Slave-hunter. Now, without relying on minute criticism, to infer his real judgment of Slavery from his condemnation on another occasion, of "men-stealers," or according to the original text, *slave-traders*, in company with "murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers," and without undertaking to show that the present epistle, when truly interpreted, is a protest against slavery and a voice for freedom—all of which might be done—I content myself by calling attention to two things apparent on its face and in themselves an all-sufficient response. First, while it appears that Onesimus has been in some way the servant of Philemon, it does not appear that he had ever been held as a slave, much less as a chattel ; and how gross and monstrous is the effort to derive a wrong, by which man is changed to a chattel, out of words, whether in the Constitution of our country or in the Bible, which do, not explicitly, unequivocally and exclusively define this wrong. Secondly, in charging Onesimus with this epistle to Philemon, the Apostle announces him as "not now a servant, but above a ser-

vant, a brother beloved," and he enjoins upon his correspondent the hospitality due only to a freeman, saying expressly "If thou count me, therefore a partner, *receive him as myself*;" ay, sir, not as a slave, not even servant, but as a brother beloved, even as the Apostle himself. Thus with apostolic pen wrote Paul to his disciple Philemon. Beyond all doubt, in these words of gentleness, benediction and emancipation, dropping with celestial, soul-awakening power, there can be no justification for a conspiracy, which, beginning with the treachery of Iscariot and the temptation of pieces of silver, seeks, by fraud, brutality and violence, through officers of the law armed to the teeth, like pirates, and amid soldiers who degrade their uniform, to hurl a fellow man back into the lash-surrounding den of American slavery; and if any one can thus prevent this beneficent example, allow me to say that he gives too much occasion to doubt his intelligence or his sincerity.

Certainly I am right in thus stripping from slavery the apology of Christianity, which it has tenaciously hugged; and here I leave the first part of my subject, assuming against every objection the necessity of our enterprise.

II. I am now brought, in the *second* place, to consider the PRACTICABILITY of the Enterprise. And here the way is easy. In showing its necessity, I have already demonstrated its practicability; for the former includes the latter, as the greater includes the less. Whatever is necessary must be practicable. By a decree which has ever been a by-word of tyranny, the Israelites were compelled to make bricks without straw; but it is not according to the ways of a benevolent Providence that man should be constrained to do what cannot be done. What must be done can be done. Besides, the Anti-Slavery Enterprise is necessary because it is right; and the right is always practicable.

I know well the little faith which the world has in the triumph of principles, and I readily imagine the despair with which our object is regarded; but not on this account am I disheartened. That exuberant writer, Sir Thomas Browne, breaks forth in the ecstatic wish for some new difficulty in Christian belief that his faith might have a new victory; and an eminent enthusiast went so far as to say that he believed because it was impossible—*credo quia impossibile*. But no such exalted faith is now required. Here is no impossibility, nor is there any difficulty which will not yield to a faithful, well-directed endeavor. If to any timid soul the Enterprise seems impossible because it is too beautiful, then I say at once that it is too beautiful not to be possible.

But descending from these summits, let me show plainly the object which it seeks to accomplish, and herein you shall see and confess its complete practicability. While discountenancing all prejudice of color and every establishment of caste, the Anti-Slavery Enterprise—at least so far as I may speak for it—does not undertake to change human nature, or to force any individual into relations of life for which he is not morally, intellectually, and socially adapted; nor does it necessarily assume that a race, degraded for long generations under the iron heel of bondage, can be lifted at once into all the political privileges of an American citizen. But, Sir, it does confidently assume, against all question, contradiction, or assault whatever, *that every man is entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; and with equal confidence it asserts that every individual, who wears the human form, whether black or white, should at once be recog-*

nized as man. I know not when this is done, what other trials may be in wait for the unhappy African; but I do know, that the Anti-Slavery Enterprise will then have triumphed, and the institution of Slavery, as defined by existing law, will no longer shock mankind.

In this work the first essential practical requisite is, that the question shall be openly and frankly confronted. Do not put it aside. Do not blank it out of sight. Do not dodge it. Approach it. Study it. Ponder it. Deal with it. Let it rest in the illumination of speech, conversation, and the Press. Let it fill the thoughts of the statesman and the prayers of the Pulpit. When Slavery is thus regarded, its true character will be recognized as a *hateful assemblage of unquestionable wrongs under the sanction of existing law*, and good men will be moved at once to apply the remedy. Already even its zealots admit that its "abuses" should be removed. This is their word and not mine. Alas! alas! Sir, it is these very "abuses" which constitute its component parts, without which it would not exist, even as the scourges in a bundle with the ax constituted the dread fasces of the Roman lictor. Take away these, and the whole embodied outrage will disappear. Surely that central assumption—more deadly than the ax itself—by which man is changed into a chattel, may be abandoned; and is not this practicable? The associate scourges by which that transcendent "abuse" is surrounded may, one by one, be subtracted. The "abuse" which substitutes concubinage for marriage—the "abuse" which annuls the parental relation—the "abuse" which closes the portals of knowledge—the "abuse" which tyrannically usurps all the labor of another, now upheld by positive law may by positive law be abolished. To say that this is not practicable in the nineteenth century would be a scandal upon mankind. And just in proportion as these "abuses" cease to have the sanction of law will the institution of Slavery cease to exist. The African, whatever may then be his condition, will no longer be *the slave* over whose wrongs and sorrows the world throbs, at times fiercely indignant and at times painfully sad, while with outstretched arms he sends forth the piteous cry, "Am I not a man and a brother?"

In pressing forward to this result the inquiry is often presented, to what extent if any shall compensation be allowed to the slave-masters? Clearly if the point be determined by *absolute justice* not the masters but the slaves will be entitled to compensation; for it is the slaves who throughout weary generations have been deprived of their toil and all its fruits which went to enrich their masters. Besides, it seems hardly reasonable to pay for the reinquishment of those disgusting "abuses" which, in their aggregation, constitute the bundle of Slavery. Pray, Sir, by what tariff, price-current or principle of equation shall their several values be estimated? What sum shall be counted out as the proper price for the abandonment of that pretension—more indecent than the *jus primæ noctis* of the feudal age, which leaves woman, whether in the arms of master or slave, always a concubine? What bribe shall be proffered for the restoration of God-given parental rights? What money shall be paid for taking off the padlock by which souls are fastened down in darkness? How much for a quit-claim to labor now meanly exacted by the strong from the weak? And what compensation shall be awarded for the surrender of that egregious assumption condemned by reason and abhorred by piety, which changes a man into a thing? I put these questions without undertaking to pass upon them. Shrinking instinctively from

any recognition of *rights founded on wrongs* I find myself shrinking also from any austere verdict which shall deny the means necessary to the great consummation we seek. Our fathers under Washington did not hesitate by act of Congress to appropriate largely for the ransom of white fellow-citizens enslaved by Algerine corsairs; and following this example I am disposed to consider the question of compensation as one of expediency, to be determined by the exigency of the hour and the constitutional powers of the Government; though such is my desire to see the foul fiend of Slavery in flight that I could not hesitate to build even a bridge of gold if necessary to promote his escape.

The *Practicability* of the Anti-Slavery Enterprise has been constantly questioned, often so superficially as to be answered at once. I shall not take time to consider the allegation, founded on considerations of economy, which audaciously assumes that Slave Labor is more advantageous than Free Labor—that Slavery is more profitable than Freedom; for this is all exploded by the official tables of the census; nor that other futile argument, that the slaves are not prepared for Freedom, and, therefore, should not be precipitated into this condition—for that is no better than the ancient Greek folly, where the anxious mother would not allow her son to go into water until he had first learned to swim. But as against the Necessity of the Anti-Slavery Enterprise, there were two chief objections, so, also, against its Practicability are there two; the first, founded on its alleged danger to the master; and the second, on its alleged damage to the slave himself.

1. The first objection, founded on the alleged *danger to the master*, most generally takes the extravagant form, that the slave if released from his present condition would cut his master's throat. Here is a blatant paradox which can pass for reason only among those who have lost their reason. With an absurdity which finds no parallel except in the defenses of Slavery, it assumes that the African, when treated justly, will show a vindictiveness which he does not exhibit when treated unjustly; that when elevated by the blessings of Freedom he will develop an appetite for blood which he never manifested when crushed by the curse of bondage. At present, the slave sees his wife ravished from his arms—sees his infant swept away to the auction block—sees the heavenly gate of knowledge shut upon him—sees his industry and all its fruits unjustly clutched by another—sees himself and offspring doomed to a servitude from which there is no redemption; and still his master sleeps secure. Will the master sleep less secure when the slave no longer smarts under these revolting atrocities? I will not trifle with your intelligence, or with the quick-passing hour, by arguing this question.

But there is a lofty example, brightening the historic page, by which the seal of experience is affixed to the conclusions of reason, and you would hardly pardon me if I failed to adduce it. By virtue of a single Act of Parliament the slaves of the British West Indies were changed at once to freemen, and this great transaction was accomplished absolutely without personal danger of any kind to the master. And yet the chance of danger there was greater far than among us. In our broad country the slaves are overshadowed by a more than sixfold white population. Only in two States, South Carolina and Mississippi, do the slaves outnumber the whites, and there but slightly, while in the entire Slave States the whites outnumber the slaves by many millions.

But it was otherwise in the British West Indies, where the whites were overshadowed by a more than sixfold slave population. The slaves were 800,000, while the whites numbered only 131,000, distributed in different proportions on the different islands. And this disproportion has since increased rather than diminished, always without danger to the whites. In Jamaica, the largest of these possessions, there are now upward of 400,000 Africans, and only 37,000 whites; in Barbadoes, the next largest possession, there are 120,000 Africans, and only 15,000 whites; in St. Lucia 19,000 Africans, and only 600 whites; in Tobago, 14,000 Africans and only 600 whites; in Montserrat 6,000 Africans, and only 150 whites; and in the Grenadines upward of 6,000 Africans, and less than 50 whites. And yet in all these places the authorities attest the uniform good behavior of the Africans. Sir Lionel Smith, the Governor of Jamaica, in his speech to the Assembly, declares that their conduct "proves how well they deserve the boon of freedom." Another Governor of another island dwells on the "peculiarly rare instances of the commission of grave or sanguinary crimes among the emancipated portion of these islands," and the Queen of England, in a speech from the throne, has announced that the complete and final emancipation of the Africans had "taken place without any disturbance of public order and tranquility." In this example I hail new confirmation of the rule that the highest safety is in doing right; and thus do I dismiss the objection founded on the alleged danger to the master.

2. And I am now brought to the second objection, founded on the alleged *damage to the slave*. It is common among the partisans of slavery to assert that our enterprise has actually retarded the very cause it seeks to promote; and this paradoxical accusation which might naturally show itself among the rank weeds of the South, is cherished here on our Northern soil by those who anxiously look for any fig-leaf with which to cover their indifference or tergiversation.

This peculiar form of complaint is an old device which has been instinctively employed on other occasions until it has ceased to be even plausible. Thus, throughout all things, has every good cause been encountered. The Saviour was nailed to the cross with a crown of thorns on his head as a disturber of that peace on earth which he came to declare. The disciples, while preaching the Gospel of forgiveness and good will, were stoned as preachers of sedition and discord. The reformers who sought to establish a higher piety and faith, were burned at the stake as blasphemers and infidels. Patriots in all ages who have striven for their country's good have been doomed to the scaffold or to exile, even as their country's enemies. And those brave Englishmen who at home under the lead of Edmund Burke, even against their own country, espoused the cause of our fathers, shared the same illogical impeachment which was touched to the quick by that orator statesman when, after exposing its essential vice "in attributing the ill-effect of ill-judged conduct to the arguments used to dissuade us from it," he denounced it as "very absurd, but very common in modern practice, and very wicked," Sir, it is very common in modern practice. In England it has vainly renewed itself with special frequency against the Bible Societies; against the friends of education; against the patrons of vaccination; against the partisans of peace, all of whom have been openly arraigned as provoking and increasing the very evils, whether of infidelity, idleness, disease or war, which they be-

nighly sought to check. And to bring an instance which is precisely applicable to our own, Wilberforce when conducting the Anti-Slavery enterprise of England, first against the slave-trade and then against slavery itself, was told that those efforts by which his name is consecrated for evermore, tended to increase the hardships of the slave even to the extent of riveting anew his chains. Such are the precedents for the imputations to which our enterprise is exposed; and also are the precedents by which I exhibit the fallacy of the imputation.

Sir, I do not doubt that the enterprise has produced heat and irritation amounting often to inflammation among slave-masters, which to superficial minds may seem inconsistent with success; but which the careful observer will recognise at once as the natural and not unhealthy effort of a diseased body to purge itself of existing imperities; and just in proportion to the malignity of the concealed poison will be the extent of inflammation. A distemper like slavery cannot be ejected like a splinter. It is perhaps too much to expect that men thus tortured should reason calmly—that patients thus suffering should comprehend the true nature of their case and kindly acknowledge the beneficent work; but not on this account can it be suspended.

In the face of this complaint I assert that the Anti-Slavery enterprise has already accomplished incalculable good. Even now it touches the national heart as it never before was touched, sweeping its strings with a might to draw forth emotions such as no political struggle has ever evoked. It moves the young, the middle-aged, and the old. It enters the family circle, and mingles with the flame of the household hearth. It reaches the souls of mothers, wives, sisters and daughters, filling all with a new aspiration for justice on earth, and awakening not merely a sentiment against slavery such as prevailed with our fathers, but a deep, undying conviction of its wrong, and a determination to leave no effort unattempted for its removal. With the sympathies of all Christendom as allies, it has already encompassed the slave-masters by a moral blockade invisible to the eye, but more potent than navies, from which there can be no escape except in final capitulation. Thus it has created the irresistible influence which itself constitutes the beginning of success. Already there are signs of change. In common speech, as well as in writing, among slave-masters, the bondman is no longer called a *slave*, but a *servant*—thus by a soft substitution concealing and condemning the true relation. Even newspapers in the land of bondage blush with indignation at the hunt of man by blood-hounds, thus protesting against an unquestionable incident of slavery. Other signs are found in the added comfort of the slave, in the enlarged attention to his wants, in the experiments now beginning, by which he is enabled to share in the profits of his labor, and thus finally secure the means to purchase his freedom; and above all in the consciousness among slave-masters themselves, that they dwell now, as never before, under the keen observation of an ever-wakeful Public Opinion, quickened by an ever-wakeful Public Press. Nor is this all. Only lately propositions have been introduced into the Legislatures of different States, and countenanced by Governors, to mitigate the existing law of slavery; and almost while speaking, I have received the drafts of two different memorials—one addressed to the Legislature of Virginia, and the other to that of North Carolina—asking for the slave three things which it will be monstrous to refuse, but which, if conceded, will take from slavery its

existing character; I mean first the protection of the marriage relation, secondly the protection of the parental relation, and thirdly the privilege of knowledge. Grant these, and the girdled Upas-tree soon must die. Sir, amid these tokens of present success and the auguries of the future, I am not disturbed by any complaints of seeming damage. "Though it consume our own dwelling, who does not venerate fire, without which human life can hardly exist on earth?" says the Hindoo proverb; and the time is even now at hand when the Anti-Slavery enterprise which is the very fire of freedom with all its incidental excesses, will be hailed with a similar regard.

Mr. President, it is not uncommon to hear persons among us at the North confess the wrong of slavery, and then folding their hands in absolute listlessness ejaculate, "What can we do about it?" Such men we encounter daily. You all know them. Among them are men in every department of human activity, who perpetually buy, build and plan, who shrink from no labor, who are daunted by no peril of commercial adventure, by no hardihood of industrial enterprise, who, reaching in their undertakings across ocean and continents, would engage "to put a girdle about the earth in forty seconds;" and yet disheartened they can join in no effort against Slavery. Others there are, especially among the youthful and enthusiastic, who vainly sigh because they were not born in the age of chivalry, at least in the days of the Revolution, not thinking that in this enterprise there is an opportunity of lofty endeavor such as no Paladin of chivalry or chief of the Revolution enjoyed. Others there are who freely bestow their means and time upon the distant inaccessible heathen of another hemisphere in the islands of the sea; and yet they can do nothing to mitigate our grander heathenism here at home. While confessing that it ought to disappear from the earth they forego, renounce and abandon all exertion against it. Others there are still (such as human inconsistency!) who plant the tree in whose full-grown shade they can never expect to sit—who hopefully drop the acorn in the earth trusting that the oak which it sends upward to the skies will shelter their children beneath its shade; but they will do nothing to plant or nurture the great tree of Liberty, that it may cover with its arms unborn generations of men.

III. And now, in the *third* place, the Anti-Slavery Enterprise, which I have shown to be at once necessary and practicable, is commended by its inherent DIGNITY. Here the reasons are obvious and unanswerable.

Its object is benevolent; nor is there, in the dreary annals of the Past, a single enterprise which stands forth more clearly and indisputably entitled to this character. With unsurpassed and touching magnanimity, it seeks to benefit the lowly whom your eyes have not seen, and who are ignorant even of your labors, while it demands and receives a self-sacrifice calculated to ennoble an enterprise of even questionable merit. Its true rank is among works properly called *philanthropic*—the title of highest honor on earth. "I take goodness in this sense," says Lord Bacon in his Essays, "the effecting of the weal of men, which is what the Grecians call *Philanthropia*—of all virtues and dignities of the mind the greatest, being the character of a Deity; and without it, man is a busy, mischievous, wretched thing, no better than a kind of vermin." Lord Bacon was right, and, perhaps, unconsciously followed a higher authority; for, when Moses asked the Lord to show unto him His glory, the Lord said "I will make all my goodness to pass before thee." Ah! Sir. Peace has trophies fair-

er and more perennial than any snatched from fields of blood, but among all these, the fairest and most perennial are the trophies of beneficence, Scholarship, literature, jurisprudence, art, may wear their well-deserved honors; but an Enterprise of goodness deserves, and will yet receive, a higher palm than these.

In other aspects its dignity is apparent. It concerns the cause of Human Freedom, which, from the earliest days, has been the darling of history. By all the memories of the Past; by the stories of childhood and the studies of youth; by every example of magnanimous virtue; by every aspiration for the good and true; by the fame of the martyrs swelling through all time; by the renown of patriots whose lives are landmarks of Human progress; by the praise lavished upon our fathers, you are summoned to this work. Unless Freedom be an illusion, and benevolence an error, you cannot resist the appeal. But our cause is nobler even than that of our fathers, inasmuch as it is more exalted to struggle for the freedom of others than for our own.

Its practical importance at this moment gives to it additional eminence. Whether measured by the number of beings it seeks to benefit; by the magnitude of the wrongs it hopes to relieve; by the difficulties with which it is beset by the political relations which it affects; or by the ability and character it has enlisted, the cause of the slave now assumes proportions of grandeur which dwarf all other interests in our broad country. In its presence the machinations of politicians, the aspirations of office-seekers and the subterfuges of party, all sink below even their ordinary insignificance. For myself, sir, I can see little else at this time among us which can tempt out on to the exposed steeps of public life, an honest man who wishes, by something that he does, to leave the world better than he found it. I can see little else which can afford any of those satisfactions which an honest man should covet. Nor is there any cause which so surely promises success:

"Oh! a fair cause stands firm and will abide;
Legions of angels fight upon its side!"

It is written that in the last days there shall be scoffers, and even this Enterprise, thus philanthropic, has not escaped their aspersions. And as the objections to its necessity were twofold, and the objections to its practicability twofold, so also are the aspersions twofold; first, in the form of hard words, and secondly by personal disparagement of those who are engaged in it.

1. The *hard words* are manifold as the passions and prejudices of men, but they generally culminate in the imputation of "fanaticism." In such a cause I am willing to be called "fanatic" or what you will; I care not for aspersions, nor shall I shrink before hard words either here or elsewhere. I have learned from that great Englishman, Oliver Cromwell, that no man can be trusted "who is afraid of a paper pellet;" and I am too familiar with his history not to know that every movement for reform in Church or State, every endeavor for Human Liberty or Human Rights, has been thus assailed. I do not forget with what facility and frequency hard words have been employed—how that grandest character of many generations, the precursor of our own Washington, without whose example our Republic might have failed—the great William, Prince of Orange, the founder of the Dutch Republic, the United States of Holland—I do not forget how he was publicly branded as a "perjurer and a pest of society;" and not to dwell on general instances how the enterprise for the

abolition of the slave trade was characterized on the floor of Parliament by one eminent speaker as "mischievous," and by another as "visionary and delusive;" and how the exalted characters which it had enlisted were arraigned by still another eminent speaker—none other than that Tarleton so conspicuous as the commander of the British horse in the Southern campaigns of our Revolution, but more conspicuous in politics at home—"as a junta of sectaries, sophists, enthusiasts and fanatics;" and also were again arraigned by no less a person than a prince of the blood, the Duke of Clarence, afterward William IV. of England, as "fanatics or hypocrites," in one of which classes he openly placed William Wilberforce. But impartial history with immortal pen has redressed these impassioned judgments, and the same impartial history will yet rejudge the impassioned judgments of this hour.

2. Hard words have been followed by personal disparagement and the sauer is often launched that our Enterprise lacks the authority of names eminent in Church and State. If this be so the more is the pity on their account, for our cause is needed to them more than they are needed to our cause. But alas! it is only according to the example of history that it should be so. It is not the eminent in Church and State, the rich and powerful, the favorites of fortune and of place, who most promptly welcome Truth when she heralds change in the existing order of things. It is others in poorer condition who throw open their hospitable hearts to the unattended stranger. Nay, more; it is not the dwellers amid the glare of the world, but the humble and lowly, who most clearly discern new duties—as the watchers placed in the depths of a well may observe the stars which are obscured to those who live in the effulgence of noon. Placed below the egotism and prejudice of self-interest or of a class—below the cares and temptations of wealth or power—in the obscurity of common life—they discern the new signal and surrender themselves unreservedly to its guidance. The Savior knew this. He did not call upon the Priest, or Levite, or Pharisee, to follow him; but upon the humble fisherman by the sea of Galilee.

And now Sir I present to you the Anti-Slavery Enterprise, vindicated in Necessity, Practicability and Dignity, against all objections. If there be any objection which I have not answered it is because I am not aware of its existence. It remains that I should give a practical conclusion to this whole matter, by showing, though in glimpses only, your SPECIAL DUTIES AS FREEMEN OF THE NORTH. And, thank God! at last there is a North.

Others till there are, particularly in the large cities, who content themselves by occasional contributions the redemption of a slave. To this object they give out of ample riches and thus seek to silence the monitions of conscience. Now, I would not discountenance any form of activity by which Human Freedom, even in a single case, may be secured. But I desire to say that such an act—too often accompanied by a Pharisaical pretension in strange contrast with perty performance—cannot be considered an essential aid to the Anti-Slavery enterprise. Not in this way can any impression be made on an evil so vast as Slavery—as you will clearly see by an illustration which I shall give. The god Thor, of Scandinavian mythology, whose strength surpassed that of Hercules, was once challenged to drain a simple cup dry. He applied it to his lips and with superhuman capacity drank, but the water did not recede even from the rim and at last the god abandoned the effort. The failure of even his extraordinary strength was explained when he learned that the simple cup had communicated by an invisible connection with the whole vast ocean beyond, out of which it was perpetually supplied and which remained absolutely unaffected by the effort. And just so will these occasions of chari-

ty, though encountered by the largest private means, be constantly renewed, for they communicate with the whole vast Black Sea of Slavery behind, out of which they are perpetually supplied and which remains absolutely unaffected by the effort. Sir, private means may cope with individual necessities, but they are powerless to redress that of a wicked institution. Charity is limited and local; the evils of Slavery are infinite and everywhere. Besides, a wrong organized and upheld by law can be removed only through a change of the law. Not then by an occasional contribution to the ransom of a slave can your duty be done in this great cause; but only by earnest, constant, valiant efforts against the institution—against the law—which makes slaves.

I am not insensible to the difficulties of this work. Full well I know the power of Slavery. Full well I know all its various intrenchments in the church, the politics and the prejudices of the country. Full well I know the sensitive interests of property, amounting to many hundred millions of dollars, which are said to be at stake. But these things can furnish no motive or apology for indifference or for any folding of the hands. Surely the wrong is not less wrong because it is gigantic, the evil is not less evil because it is immeasurable; nor can the duty of perpetual warfare with wrong or evil be in this instance suspended. Nay, because Slavery is powerful—because the enterprise is difficult—therefore is the duty of all more exigent. The well tempered soul does not yield to difficulties, but presses “onward forever” with increased resolution.

And here the question occurs, which is so often pressed in argument or in taunt, “What have we at the North to do with Slavery?” In answer, I might content myself by saying that, as members of the human family, bound together by the cords of a common manhood, there is no human wrong to which we can justly be insensible, nor is there any human sorrow which we should not seek to relieve; but I prefer to say, on this occasion, that, as citizens of the United States, anxious for the good name, the repose, and the prosperity of the Republic—that it may be a blessing and not a curse to mankind—there is nothing among all its diversified interests, under the National Constitution, with which, at this moment, we have so much to do; nor is there anything with regard to which our duties are so irresistibly clear. I do not dwell on the scandal of Slavery in the national capital—of Slavery in the national territories—of the coastwise slave-trade on the high seas beneath the national flag—all of which are outside of State limits, and within the exclusive jurisdiction of Congress, where you and I, Sir, and every freeman of the North, are compelled to share the responsibility and help to bind the chain. To dislodge Slavery from these usurped footholds under the Constitution, and thus at once to relieve ourselves from a grievous responsibility, and to begin the great work of emancipation, were an object worthy of an exalted ambition. But before even this can be commenced, there is a great work, more than any other important and urgent, which must be consummated in the domain of national politics, and also here at home in the Free States. The National Government itself must be emancipated, so that it shall no longer wear the yoke of servitude; and Slavery in all its pretensions must be dislodged from its usurped foothold, in the Free States themselves, thus relieving ourselves from a grievous responsibility at our own doors, and emancipating the North. Emancipation, even within the national jurisdiction, can be achieved only through the emancipation of the Free States, accompanied by the complete emancipation of the National Government. Ay, Sir, emancipation at the South can be reached only through the emancipation of the North. And this is my answer to the interrogatory. What have we at the North to do with Slavery?

But the answer may be made yet more irresistible, while with mingled

sorrow and shame I portray the tyrannical power which holds us in thralldom. Notwithstanding all its excess of numbers, wealth and intelligence, the North is now the vassal of an OLIGARCHY, whose single inspiration comes from Slavery. According to the official tables of our recent census the *slave-masters*—men, women and children, all told—are only THREE HUNDRED AND FORTY-SEVEN THOUSAND; and yet this small company now dominates over the Republic, determines its national policy, disposes of its offices and sways all to its absolute will. With a watchfulness that never sleeps and an activity that never tires—with as many eyes as Argus and as many arms as Briareus—the SLAVE OLIGARCHY asserts its perpetual and insatiate masterdom; now seizing a broad territory once covered by a time-honored ordinance of Freedom; now threatening to wrest Cuba from Spain by violent war or hardly less violent purchase; now hankering for another slice of Mexico, merely to find new scope for Slavery; now proposing to once more open the hideous, heaven-defying Slave-trade, and thus to replenish its shambles with human flesh, and now, by the lips of an eminent Senator, asserting an audacious claim to the whole group of the West Indies, whether held by Holland, Spain, France or England as “our Southern Islands,” while it assails the independence of Hayti, and stretches its treacherous ambition even to the distant Valley of the Amazon.

In maintaining its power, the Slave Oligarchy has applied a new test for office, very different from that of Jefferson: “Is he honest? Is he capable? Is he faithful to the constitution?” These things are all forgotten now in the controlling question “Is he faithful to Slavery?” With arrogant ostracism it excludes from every national office all who cannot respond to this test. So complete and irrational has this tyranny become, that at this moment while I now speak, could Washington, Jefferson or Franklin once more descend from their spheres above to mingle in our affairs and bless us with our wisdom, not one of them, with his recorded, *unretracted*, opinions on Slavery, could receive a nomination for the Presidency from a National Convention of either of the late great political parties; nor, stranger still, could either of these sainted patriots, whose names alone open a perpetual fountain of gratitude in all your hearts, be confirmed by the Senate of the United States for any political function whatever under the National Government—not even for the office of Postmaster. What I now say, amid your natural astonishment, I have more than once uttered from my seat in the Senate, and no man there has made an answer, for no man who has sat in its secret sessions and there learned the test which is practically applied could make an answer; and I ask you to accept this statement as my testimony, derived from the experience which has been my lot. Yes, fellow-citizens, had this test prevailed in the earlier days, Washington—first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen—could not have been created Generalissimo of the American forces; Jefferson could not have taken his place on the Committee to draft the Declaration of Independence; and Franklin could not have gone forth to France with the commission of the infant Republic to secure the invaluable alliance of that ancient kingdom.

And this giant strength is used with a giant heartlessness. By a cruel enactment, which has no source in the Constitution—which defies justice—which tramples on humanity—and which rebels against God. The Free States are made the hunting-ground for slaves, and you, and I, and all good citizens, are summoned to join in the loathsome and abhorred work. Your hearts and judgments, swift to feel and condemn, will not require me to expose here the abomination of the Fugitive Slave bill or its utter unconstitutionality. Elsewhere I have done this, and never been answered. Nor will you expect that an enactment, so entirely devoid of all just sanc-

tion, should be called by the sacred name of *law*. History still repeats the language in which our fathers persevered, when they denounced the last emanation of British tyranny, which heralded the Revolution, as the Boston Port *Bill*, and I am content with this precedent. I have said that if any man finds in the Gospel any support of Slavery, it is because Slavery is already in himself; so do I now say, if any man finds in the Constitution of our country any support of the Fugitive Slave bill, it is because that bill is already in himself. One of our ancient masters—Aristotle, I think—tells us that every man has a beast in his bosom; but the Northern citizen who has the Fugitive Slave bill there, has worse than a beast—a devil! And yet in this bill—more even than in the ostracism at which you rebel—does the Slave Oligarchy stand confessed; heartless, grasping, tyrannical; careless of humanity, right or the Constitution; wanting that foundation of justice which is the essential base of every civilized community; stuck together only by confederacy in spoliation; and constituting in itself a *magnum latrocinium*; while it degrades the Free States to the condition of a slave plantation, under the lash of a vulgar, despised and revolting overseer.

Surely, fellow citizens, without hesitation or postponement, you will insist that this Oligarchy shall be overthrown; and here is the foremost among the special duties of the North, now required for the honor of the Republic, for our own defence, and in obedience to God. Urging this comprehensive duty, I ought to have hours rather than minutes before me; but in a few words you shall see its comprehensive importance. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy, and Slavery will cease at once in the National capitol. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy, and liberty will become the universal law of all the national territories. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy, and the slave-trade will no longer skulk along our coasts beneath the national flag. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy, and the National Government will be at length divorced from Slavery. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy, and the whole national policy will be changed from Slavery to Freedom. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy, and the North will no longer be the vassal of the South. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy, and the North will be lifted to its just share in the trusts and honors of the Republic. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy, and you will possess the master-key to unlock the whole house of bondage. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy, and the gates of emancipation will be open at the South.

But without waiting for this consummation, there is another special duty to be done here at home on our own soil, which must be made free in reality as in name. And here I shall speak frankly, though not without a proper sense of the responsibility of my words. I know that I cannot address you entirely as a private citizen; but I shall say nothing here which I have not said elsewhere, and which I shall be proud to vindicate everywhere. "A lie," it has been declared, "should be trampled out and extinguished forever," and surely you will do nothing less with a wicked and tyrannical enactment like this. The Fugitive Slave bill, while it continues unrepealed, must be made a dead letter, not by violence; not by any unconstitutional activity of intervention; not even by hasty conflict between jurisdictions; but by an aroused Public Opinion, which, in its irresistible might shall blast with contempt, indignation and abhorrence, all who consent to be its agents. Thus did our fathers blast all who did become the agents of the Stamp Act; and surely their motive was small compared with ours. The Slave-hunter who drags his victim from Africa is loathed as a monster; but I defy any acuteness of reason to indicate the moral difference between this act and that of the Slave-hunter who drags his victim from our Northern free soil. A few puny persons calling themselves the Congress of the United States, with the titles of Represent-

tetives and Senators, cannot turn wrong into right—cannot change a man into a thing—cannot reverse the irreversible law of God—cannot make him wicked who hunts a slave on the burning sands of Congo or Guinea, and make him virtuous who hunts a slave in the colder streets of Boston or New York. Nor can any acuteness of reason distinguish between the bill of sale from the kidnapper, by which the unhappy African was originally transferred in Congo or Guinea, and the certificate of the Commissioner, by which, when once again in Freedom, he was reduced anew to bondage. The acts are kindred and should share a kindred condemnation.

One man's virtue becomes a standard of excellence for all, and there is now in Boston a simple citizen whose example may be a lesson to Commissioners, Marshals, Magistrates, while it fills all with the beauty of a generous act. I refer to Mr. Hayes, who resigned his place in the city police rather than take any part in the pack of the Slave-hunter. He is now the door-keeper of the public edifice which has been honored this winter by the triumphant lecture on Slavery. Better be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord than a dweller in the tents of the ungodly. For myself let me say that I can imagine no office, no salary, no consideration, which I would not gladly forego rather than become in any way an agent for the enslavement of my brother man. Where, for me, would be comfort or solace after such a work! In dreams and in walking hours, in solitude and in the street, in the study of the open book and in conversation with the world, wherever I turned, there my victim would stare me in the face, while from the distance rice-fields and sugar-plantations of the South, his cries beneath the vindictive lash, his moans at the thought of liberty once his—now, alas! ravished away—would pursue me, repeating the tale of his fearful doom, and sounding—forever sounding—in my ears, "Thou art the man." Mr. President may no such terrible voice ever fall on your soul or mine!

Yes, Sir, here our duty is plain and paramount. While the Slave Oligarchy, through its unrepealed Slave bill undertakes to enslave our free soil, we can only turn for protection to a Public Opinion worthy of a humane, just and religious people, which shall keep perpetual guard over the liberties of all within our borders; nay, more, which, like the flaming sword of the cherubim at the gates of Paradise, turning on every side, shall prevent any Slave-hunter from ever setting foot on our sacred soil. Elsewhere he may pursue his human prey; he may employ his congenial blood hounds and exult in his successful game. But into these domains of Freedom he must not come. And this Public Opinion, with Freedom as its watchword, must proclaim not only the overthrow of the Slave bill, but also the overthrow of the Slave Oligarchy behind—the two pressing duties of the North essential to our own emancipation; and believe me, Sir, while they remain undone nothing is done.

Mr. President, far 'already have I trespassed upon your generous patience, but there are other things which still press for utterance. Something would I say of the arguments by which our Enterprise is commended; something also of the appeal it makes to men of every condition, and something also of union as a vital necessity among all who love Freedom.

I know not if our work can be soon accomplished. I know not, Sir, if you or I can live to see in our Republic the vows of the Fathers at length fulfilled as the last fetter falls from the limbs of the last slave. But one thing I do know beyond all doubt or question, that this Enterprise must go on—that in its irresistible current it will sweep schools, colleges, churches, the intelligence, the conscience and the religious aspiration of the land, while all who stand in its way or speak evil of it are laying up for their children, if not for themselves, days of sorrow and shame. Better to strive in this cause even unsuccessfully than never to strive at all.

There is no weapon in the celestial armory of truth ; there is no sweet influence from the skies ; there is no generous word that ever dropped from human lips, which may not be employed. Ours, too, is the argument alike of the Conservative and the Reformer, for our cause stands on the truest conservatism and the truest reform. It seeks the conservation of Freedom itself and of kindred historic principles ; it seeks also the reform of Slavery and of the kindred tyranny by which it is upheld. Religion, morals, justice, economy, the Constitution, may each and all be invoked ; and one person is touched by one argument, while another person is touched by another. You do not forget how Christopher Columbus won Isabella of Spain to his enterprise of discovery. He first presented to her the temptation of extending her dominions, but she harkened not. He next promised to her the dazzling wealth of the Indies, and still she harkened not. But when at last was pictured to her pious imagination the poor heathen with souls to be saved, then the youthful Queen poured her royal jewels into the lap of the Genoese adventurer, and at her expense that fleet was sent forth which gave to Spain and to mankind a new world.

As in this enterprise, there is a place for every argument, so also is there a place for every man. Even as on the broad shield of Achilles, sculptured by divine art, was wrought every form of human activity ; so, in this cause, which if the very shield of Freedom, whatever man can do, by deed or speech, may find its place. One may act in one way, and another in another way ; but all must act. Providence is felt through individuals ; the dropping of water wears away the rock ; and no man can be so humble or poor as to be excused from this work, while to all the happy in fortune, genius, or fame, it makes a special appeal. Here is room for the strength of Luther, and the sweetness of Melancthon ; for the wisdom of age, and the ardor of youth ; for the judgement of the statesman and the eloquence of the orator ; for the grace of the scholar, and the aspiration of the poet ; for the learning of the professor, and the skill of the lawyer ; for the exhortations of the preacher, and the persuasion of the Press ; for the various energy of the citizen, and the abounding sympathy of woman.

And still one thing more is needed, without which Liberty-loving men, and even their arguments, will fail in power—even as without charity all graces of knowledge, speech and faith are said to profit nothing. I mean that *Unity of Spirit*—in itself a fountain of strength—which filling the people of the North, shall make them tread under foot past antipathies, decayed dissensions, and those irritating names which now exist only as the tattered ensigns of ancient strife. It is right to be taught by the enemy, and with the example before us and their power brandished in our very faces we cannot hesitate. With them Slavery is made the main-spring of political life and the absorbing centre of political activity ; with them all differences are swallowed up by this *one* idea, as all other rods were swallowed up by the rod of Aaron ; with them all unite to keep the National Government under the control of slave-masters ; and surely we should not do less for Freedom than they do for Slavery. We too must be united. Among us, at last, mutual criticism, crimination and feud must give place to mutual sympathy, trust and alliance. Face to face against the Slave Oligarchy must be rallied the UNITED-MASSSES of the North, in compact political association—planted on the everlasting base of justice—knit together by the instincts of a common danger, and by the holy sympathies of humanity—enkindled by a love of Freedom not only for themselves, but for others—determined to enfranchise the National Government from degrading thralldom—and constituting the BACKBONE PARTY, powerful in numbers, wealth and intelligence, but more powerful still in an inspiring cause. Let this be done and victory will be ours.